

NOTICE.

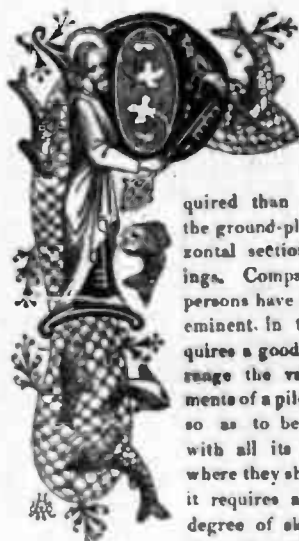
As it is our intention to publish almost immediately a Second Edition of Mr. Bartholomew's Cyclopædia of the Building-Act, accompanied by the whole of the Text of the Act itself, in a small pocket form, only 5½ ins. by 3 ins., we should be obliged by receiving, in the course of next week, any notices of corrections and suggestions for improvements.

It is also our intention to publish in *THE BUILDER* Mr. Bartholomew's Notes upon the Act, which will also be given in the pocket edition.

The Builder.

No. XCII.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1844.



ERHAPS
In no other
branch of
architect-
ure is
there more
study re-

quired than in forming
the ground-plans or hori-
zontal sections of build-
ings. Comparatively few
persons have ever become
eminent in this. It re-
quires a good head to ar-
range the various apart-
ments of a pile of building,
so as to be convenient,
with all its details just
where they should be; and
it requires a still higher
degree of skill to do this
in such manner that a

structure raised from such a ground-plot shall
be sound, scientific, and architectural.

The good planner never forgets that his
work has to be *BUILT* and to be *WORKED*
OVER; he, therefore, is never at a loss in his
construction, except some incompetent person
interfere with his projects, and cause him
trouble to overcome the unnatural difficulties
which have been created. Direct passages,
uniformity of the members composing the
apartments, free access and lighting, chimneys
placed advantageously for diffusing warmth the
most uniformly, and husbanding the consump-
tion of fuel in the best manner,—are some of
the elements of good planning. When you
see skew passages, slanted door-jambes, all
manner of clever expensive contrivances by
enrichments, false screen-work, a constant re-
currence to blank spaces and doors, you may
rest assured the man who planned all this is
very inferior as an architectural designer,
since he is unskilful in the highest, while at
the same time the most necessary branch of
architectural knowledge.

When you see domes raised out of flat
ceilings, or ill-adapted to irregular apartments,
by means of spandril ceiling-pieces at the
corners, you may at once know their designer
has much to learn, that he is as yet destitute of
that integrity of feeling which can alone make
him an architect; for he needs to have infused
in him his profession's life and soul. He
does not think masonically, for if he did,
he would design and build nothing which
could not be executed with stone: the
bare attempt to rear his domes in ma-
sonry upon flat ceilings, would bring down
the work over him. Every person who sins
in this respect should be banished to a region
where masonry alone can be procured;
and he should be there nurtured to ar-

chitectural decency by being obliged to
build masonically. The stone-roofed abbot's
kitchen, at Glastonbury, outliving spolia-
tion several centuries, yet remains. The
Rotunda has, with its incombustible cupola,
survived the sacking and burning of Rome
during the greater part of two thousand
years, and may perhaps last as much longer:
and a variety of other buildings have been
as fortunate from the same caution; but
in modern times the example seems almost
lost: prudence and science claim rigidly the
dictates of legitimate architecture, yet with how
little success may be seen by any one who
will detail to himself what has been done
among us in modern times. As long as the
architecture of the empire is in inferior hands,
all the deceitful advice which out-wards the
public with its eyes open, will by address
(which were better employed in planning legiti-
mately) lay the employer under contributions
for the priceless stuff, which the skilled con-
scientious architect will not palm upon the
ignorant. As we proceed, what are our own
particular views upon the subject will be amply
seen.

Good architecture must be planned conve-
niently, soundly, elegantly, practically, and
rationally. It has no petty whims about it;
it must be geometrical, it must be regular, or
if any thing irregular, then only with certain
deviations from uniformity. The ground-plot,
the elevation, the perspective effect, the con-
struction, the use, the duration, the dimension,
all go forward in the skilful planner's mind at
the same time. None, therefore, but a
superior mind can plan architecture. Cracks
are rarely found in the walls of a good
planner, because tie, union, and correct
gravitation run throughout his constructions,
by reason of the first planning. The passages
of a good planner are never dark, irregular,
nor tortuous; he places no water-closets in ob-
scure corners, but ever brings them to the light
and to open ventilation; the good planner is not
in the habit of lighting several separate places,
offices, or apartments from the same window;
he seldom uses "borrowed lights," but gives
to every place its own; you never see in the
work of the able planner one apartment made
irregular by sweeping out of it the fine shapes
of another, for with him, whatever be the com-
plexity, the walls are placed as exactly and as
economically of space as are the parities of a
honey-comb; you do not see in some parts of
his work huge masses of walling or masonry,
and in others thin mere cuticle-work, to fill up
or to give space, just as maladroitness chances
to render such necessary. But where you
see great masses, the altitude and bear-
ings of the elevation require them; no
part of a good plan is stuffed, nor are the
irregularities made up by the extravagance of
solid work, nor do you see portions of the
space battened off and left vacant for the
mere purpose of creating regularity; the good
planner never falls into dilemmas which
render these costly blotches necessary. The
ground-plan of a building is seldom under-
stood by unprofessional persons, and how
should it, since so many professional ones
are themselves so deficient in this knowledge?
and yet before a man builds a house it would
be well were he to learn the language of plans;
nothing can be more methodical, nothing can
convey to the mind more exactly the details of
which any person building usually desires to
know so much.

In good planning, menial but necessary
domestic offices are out of sight, yet nigh at
hand. Excesses about buildings are mostly
the result of desperately inferior planning; the
confusion in inferior staircases comes from the
same fault. When good plans are obtained,
they should be esteemed as precious. Great
genius and attainments made Wren the most
illustrious planner of public edifices. The
ground-plan of St. Paul's Cathedral, for beauty,
geometrical expedients, vista, and harmony,
transcends that of all other sacred edifices
in the world. The disposition of the columns
in avenues to produce the regular peristyle
supporting the cupola of St. Stephen's, Wal-
brook, has in the world no competing rival.
The plan of the Royal Exchange dares not
exhibit itself with that of the little church
of St. Benet-Finck, lately mentioned by us.
Of the minor works of Wren little is known
by the public at large; the plan of St. Antholine,
Wadding-street, conformed, like that of St.

Benet-Finck, to the public way, is another
master-piece. St. Swithin's, London-stone,
where the rectangular plan is cast by diagonal
architraves into the form of an octagon, bearing
a dome of the same plan, is worthy of remark.
Even the church of St. Mildred, Bread-street,
the plan of which is a simple rectangle, gives
a worthy instance of the manner in which
a circular dome may be raised above a square
pendentive, and by its rich band of fruit and
flowers may throw into the shade our modern
mean plastering. The interiors of St. Anne's by
Aldersgate, Saint Martin Ludgate, and St.
Benet's Paul's Wharf, each containing four
interior columns, are worthy of remark. The
plans of the steeple of St. Bride's, St. Vedast's,
St. Stephen's Walbrook, St. Michael's Pater-
noster, St. James's Garlick-hill, St. Mary-le-
bow, Christ Church Newgate-street, and of the
turrets of St. Paul's Cathedral, are all different;
and are all master-pieces of genius, made
illustrious by the guidance of geometric art.

Among modern planners, Sir John Soane
possessed no mean ability, though he was very
inferior to Wren in science and acquirements;
he seldom carried his works to any very great
degree of high art. Many of the parts of the
Bank of England exhibit great skill in planning,
and one thing in it is greatly to be admired,—
the prolongation of vista. He resorted success-
fully to many fine expedients for overcoming
the difficulties produced by so great an establish-
ment, growing up piecemeal upon an irregu-
lar increasing site, and constantly requiring
change from the fluctuating and expanding
nature of its departments.

The management of the turned passage
from the Old Court into the Rotunda, which
forms an alteration from the original en-
trance, has no rival. The shaping of the
Bullion-court, so as to adapt itself to the
lines of the apartments parallel to Thread-
needle-street and to those parallel to Loth-
bury, is worthy of study. The Lothbury-court,
which was built to accommodate itself to the
site, before it was enlarged to Princes-street,
deserves to be examined attentively, and
the vista from the east alcove of this court
through the offices into the Rotunda (now
from a subsequent alteration not open to
general access), is as fine in planning as any
thing which has ever been done. The Bank
of England is full of ingenious expedients
to overcome irregularities of site, though they
are not all scientifically worked out in the
section and elevation. The Lothbury and
Princes-street corner of the Bank, though
only ornamental and for the purpose of
concealing the acute irregular angle of the
building at that part, is formed on a most
masterly plan, which shows first-rate genius, and
it would be well for Welby Pugin himself to
learn how to plan before he utters any more
trumpery relative to it. To overcome the diffi-
culties and irregularities of site, requires calibre
of mind different from the making of mere
irregular masses, where the designer has free
scope to work in any way he pleases. But
the weak mind, always vain, mistakes for
genius that vanity which occasions it to
overlook the skill and science of others.

Planning has fallen, because the sciences ap-
plied to architecture have of late gone much into
desuetude. At some future time we propose to
collect the finest examples of planning, and we
hope to be able to give in our columns
some original designs, which we do not
undertake to place in competition with those
of the masters we have named, yet affording
hints, we trust, for developing this neglected
branch of true architectonic art. In small dwell-
ings, the confined space often prevents its full
development, yet much more may be done
in this respect to beautify moderate habita-
tions than is generally supposed.

F P.

THE KING OF PRUSSIA AND MR. HABER-
SHON, THE ARCHITECT.—The king of Prussia
has been graciously pleased to confer on
Matthew Habershon, Esq., of London, the great
gold medal for science and literature, in token
of his Majesty's high approbation of his work
on the "Ancient Half-timbered Houses of
England." Mr. Habershon, who is the archi-
tect of the church and other buildings erecting
at Jerusalem, was honoured with a long private
interview with the King of Prussia, relative to
those extensive works, on his return from the
Holy Land last year.